

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 06325 141346Z

53

ACTION NEA-10

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SUBJECT: ISREALI ACTIVITIES IN THE GULF OF SUEZ: PRESS COVERAGE

REF: TEL AVIV 6294

1. THE DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON ON THE GULF OF SUEZ DRILLING DISPUTE IS FRONT-PAGE NEW IN ALL MORNING PAPERS. THE POST, DAVAR AND HATZPFEH CARRY EDITORIALS.
2. HAARETZ WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT MARGALIT WRITES THAT AMBASSADOR DINITZ HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO POSTPONE HIS JERUSALEM CONSULTATIONS AND TO STAY FOR URGENT TALKS WITH THE STAET DEPARTMENT. HE WILL BE JOINTED BY MFA DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL EVRON AND A SENIOR NAVAL OFFICER. WASHINGTON SOURCES ARE CITED AS THINKING "ISRAEL WILL ALLOW THE U.S. TO CROSS THE MEDIAN LINE IN THE GULF, BUT WANTS TO MAKE SURE THAT AMOCO WILL NOT PENETRATE INTO THE AREAS HELD BY THE IDF ON THE EAST SHORE.... ISREALI SOURCES HOPE DINITZ AND EVRON WILL BE ABLE TO COMPLETE THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN TWO SESSIONS."
3. AL HAMISHMAR NOTES THAT THE TALKS STARTING THURSDAY "WERE AGREED ON YESTERDAY AT A MEETING IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE IN TEL AVIV BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER RABIN AND U.S.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 06325 141346Z

AMBASSADOR TOON. IT WAS THE THIRD MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME

MINISTER AND THE AMBASSADOR IN LESS THAN A WEEK, WITH THE AIM OF 'COOLING OFF' THE TENSE ATMOSPHERE...(IN WHICH) ONLY MAXIMUM RESTRAINT...PREVENTED A SHOOTING INCIDENT...THE SUMMATION REACHED IN THE CONTACTS IS IN LINE WITH ISRAEL'S SECURITY INTERESTS AND CONFIRMS THAT ANY ACTIVITY BY THIRD PARTIES EAST OF THE MEDIAN LINE REQUIRES DISCUSSION WITH ISRAEL AS THE PARTY WHICH IS IN CONTROL OF THE AREA."

4. THE JERUSALEM POST (LANDAU) SAYS: "THE OIL DRILLING DISPUTE WITH THE U.S. IS TO BE RESOLVED (HOPEFULLY) IN HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN ISRAELI AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS TO BEGIN IN WASHINGTON ON THURSDAY. THIS WAS ANNOUNCED IN JERUSALEM YESTERDAY FOLLOWING ANOTHER MEETING--THE THIRD SINCE THE GULF OF SUEZ INCIDENT--BETWEEN PREMIER RABIN AND U.S. AMBASSADOR MALCOLM TOON, WHO LATER ALSO MET WITH DEFENSE MINISTER SHIMON PERES.

5. "ISRAEL'S ENVOY IN WASHINGTON, SIMHA DINITZ, IS POSTPONING HIS PLANNED VISIT TO JERUSALEM THIS WEEKEND IN ORDER TO LEAD THE CONSULTATIONS AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT. HE WILL BE JOINED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL EFRAIM EVRON, WHO IS FLYING TO WASHINGTON ESPECIALLY TOGETHER WITH AN ARMY CARTOGRAPHER."

6. DAVAR NOTES EDITORIALY THAT "THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ISRAELI UNDERSTANDING OF THE LEGAL ASPECT...ARE NOT NEW, BUT THE SHOTS FIRED AT THE AMERICAN COMPANY'S OIL FLOATS AND THE INTERFERENCE WITH THE DRILLING HAVE AROUSED POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES AND COMMERCIAL CONCERNS IN THE U.S. WHICH WERE LIABLE TO TROUBLE THE CLIMATE OF U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONS." DAVAR THINKS IT CLEAR THAT "ANY DETERIORATION OF THIS DISPUTE COULD HAVE EMBARRASSED THE REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION IN THE MIDST OF THE CAMPAIGN AND HARM ISRAELI VITAL INTERESTS IN THE U.S. STILL MORE, WHILE THE ONLY SIDE THAT STOOD TO BENEFIT POLITICALLY WAS, OF COURSE, EGYPT."

7. HATZOFEH'S EDITORIALIST IS OF THE OPINION THAT AMOCO'S ATTEMPT TO DISREGARD THE MEDIAN LINE "DERIVED APPARENTLY FROM THE ONE-SIDED POLITICAL CONCEPTION THAT ITS LICENSE GIVES IT UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 TEL AV 06325 141346Z

DRILLING RIGHTS ALSO IN ISRAEL'S TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED TERRITORY. BECAUSE OF THE FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, ISRAEL WAS PATIENT...BUT EVEN PATIENCE HAS ITS LIMITS WHEN THE LINE IS CROSSED WITHOUT PERMISSION...ISRAEL'S INTEREST IS MAINLY THAT ITS CONTROL IN THE GULF EAST OF THE MEDIAN LINE BE RECOGNIZED."

8. AN EDITORIAL IN THE JERUSALEM POST SAYS THAT DETAILS ARE

STILL TO BE WORKED OUT, "BUT THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF A SETTLEMENT WERE ALREADY AGREED UPON AT A MEETING YESTERDAY BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER YITZHAK RABIN AND AMBASSADOR MALCOLM TOON." THE EDITORIAL GOES ON TO SAY THAT "BASICALLY, THIS INCOLVES AN ACCEPTANCE BY THE U.S. OF THE ISRAELI CONTENTION THAT THE SITUATION CREATED IN THE SUEZ GULF BY THE 1967 SIX DAY WAR MUST BE MAINTAINED--SOUTH, THAT IS, OF ABU RODEIS, WHICH HAS IN THE MEANTIME BEEN CEDED BACK TO THE EGYPTIANS. THE CONCES- SION GRANTED BACK IN 1964 BY THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT TO THE AMOCO COMPANY WILL BE FULLY RESPECTED, BUT NO FRESH OIL DRILLINGS WILL IN FACT BE ATTEMPTED EAST OF THE GULF'S MEDIAN LINE WITHOUT THE PRIOR CONSENT OF THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES." TOON

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